

**ALMENA TOWNSHIP**  
**27625 CR 375**  
**PAW PAW, MI 49079**  
**ALMENA TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**FEBRUARY 15, 2023**

- I. The Almena Township Board meeting was held at the Township Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Supervisor VanTassel.  
**Roll Call:** Kelly Redmond, Geoff Moffat, Sandra Rickli, and Bill VanTassel  
**Absent:** Tim Kloosterman and Greg Babik
- II. **Agenda Changes/Approval:** Add “9. Fire Millage Adjustment” to “New Business” and “4. Marihuana Facility Open Application Window” to “Unfinished Business.”  
**Motion** by Geoff Moffat to approve the February 15, 2023 agenda as amended, **second** by Kelly Redmond.  
**Motion passed 4-0.**
- III. **Meeting Minutes Changes/Approval:**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes of January 18, 2023:**  
**Motion** by Geoff Moffat to approve the January 18, 2023 meeting minutes as presented, **second** by Kelly Redmond.  
**Motion passed 4-0.**
- IV. **Presentation and Approval of Bills:**  
The Clerk presented the monthly disbursements for the period of January 23, 2023 through February 15, 2023. Invoices to be paid of \$124,757.20; checks written February 1, 2023 of \$2,634.52; payroll paid of \$12,074.12 for a total of \$135,465.84. Check for \$4,000 was added for a marihuana permit refund.  
**Motion** by Sandra Rickli to approve the disbursements in the amount of \$139,465.84, **second** by Geoff Moffat.  
**Motion passed 4-0.**
- V. **Reports:**  
**Road Commission:** Wayne Nelson, Chairman of the VBCRC Board of Commissioners, reported Bret Witkowski is the new Managing Director.  
**Commissioner:** Dick Godfrey, County Commissioner, presented his report. Charles Norton was appointed as Interim County Administrator; a new GIS Department Director was hired; the proceeds from the sale of the seized house will be used for public safety; ARPPA funds for internet will be voted on at the February 28th meeting Commissioners meeting.  
**Sheriff Department:** Deputy Turner reported 47 complaints in January 2023.
- VI. **Limited Public Comment:**  
**Mark Roman**, 29050 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, thanked the clerk’s department for the accurate outcome of the Almena Township recount of Proposal 2. The entire Michigan recount resulted in 40% uncountable and 70% not matching the poll book.
- VII. **Reports:**  
**Clerk:** The mileage rate for 2023 has increased for 2023 has to \$0.655; the MTA annual conference is in April; Farming for the Future is March 7<sup>th</sup>; the State and Bureau of Elections is working on the implementation of Proposal 2 requirements.  
**Treasurer:** Reassessing the township’s investments and looking for a better return on investment; reviewing the implementation of credit card payments; checking into payment fraud protection with Mercantile Bank.  
**Zoning Board of Appeals:** N/A

Supervisor: Attended the Van Buren County Sustainable Materials Management Forum; discussing a land swap with the DNR (see letter); looking for a Deputy Supervisor (see posting); and the township spring clean-up day is April 15, 2023.

Zoning Administrator: N/A

Planning Commission: None

Fire Chief: Fire Chief, Scott Brooks, informed the board that 19 of the 80 calls received at the Mattawan Fire Department last month were in Almena Township.

**VIII. New Business:**

1. Mailed Public Notice Distance Discussion:

The zoning enabling act requires a 300 feet radial search for required notifications. With regard to the large parcels in in the township, 660 feet was recommended.

Motion by Geoff Moffat to implement the radial search for properties to 660 feet, **second** by Sandra Rickli.

**Motion passed 4-0.**

2. Zoning Board of Appeals Additional Members:

The increase in the population to 5,308 resulted in the addition of two Zoning Board of Appeals members. The two alternates for the ZBA agreed to the fill the positions.

Motion by Geoff Moffat to appoint Mark Roman to the ZBA for the statutory term, **second** by Bill VanTassel.

**Motion passed 4-0.**

Motion by Geoff Moffat to appoint Rich Wyrwa to the ZBA for the statutory term, **second** by Bill VanTassel.

**Motion passed 4-0.**

3. Planning Commission Re-appointment (John Wagner):

The term of John Wagner, Planning Commission vice Chair has expired and he has agreed to another term.

Motion by Sandra Rickli to appoint John Wagner to another 3 year term on the Planning Commission, second by Geoff Moffat.

**Motion passed 4-0.**

4. Lockman Drain:

The letter from the Van Buren County Drain Commissioner was presented for the Board's information.

5. Selection Criteria for Marihuana Establishments:

The "Procedure for Accepting Applications and the Competitive Review Process under Ordinance 2022-04 Authorizing Adult-Use Marihuana Establishments" was reviewed.

Motion by Geoff Moffat to approve the document provided by counsel, "Procedure for Accepting Application and the Competitive Review Process," **second** by Kelly Redmond.

**Motion passed 4-0.**

6. Recommendation for Planning Commission Start Time of 6:30 pm:

The Township Board meeting starts at 6:30 pm. To be consistent, it is the consensus of the board to recommend a 6:30 pm start time for the Planning Commission.

7. Trustee Resignation:

Nick Toman, trustee and planning commission liaison, submitted his resignation effective immediately.

Motion by Kelly Redmond to accept the resignation of Nick Toman from the Board of Trustees and Planning Commission Liaison, **second** by Geoff Moffat.

**Motion passed 4-0.**

The Township Board would like to thank Nick Toman for his service.

John Faul, Planning Commissioner, has agreed to replace Nick Toman on the Board as Trustee and Township Board Liaison.

Motion by Geoff Moffat to appoint John Faul as Township Board Trustee to serve the rest of Nick Toman's term, **second** by Sandra Rickli.

**Motion passed 4-0.**

Joe Vyverman served as an alternate on the Planning Commission and is on the Board of Review.

**Motion** by Geoff Moffat to appoint Joe Vyverman to the Planning Commission, **second** by Kelly Redmond.

**Motion passed 4-0.**

8. Planning and Zoning Fees and Escrow Discussion:

The revised Planning and Zoning Application and Escrow Fee Schedule were presented with changes.

**Motion** by Kelly Redmond to approve the revised Planning and Zoning Application and Escrow Fee Schedule as presented effective February 15, 2023, **second** by Bill VanTassel.

**Motion passed 4-0.**

9. Fire Millage Adjustment:

The 1.4 fire millage is only 1.36 mils with the Headlee Amendment applied and does not cover the three fire departments costs. A public hearing needs to be scheduled to equate the millage to 1.4 mills with the Headlee Amendment. The 0.04 difference makes a \$35,000 shortfall.

**Motion** by Kelly Redmond to set a public hearing for the next board meeting, March 15, 2023 to adjust the fire millage, **second** by Bill VanTassel.

**Motion passed 4-0.**

**IX. Unfinished Business:**

1. Building Department Discussion: Implementation of an in house building department will be postponed. Almena Township will request a new one year contract for building services with Antwerp Township. A motion will be made at the March meeting.

2. Goals – 2023

Suggestions consisted of partnering with local senior services; recycling; public open spaces; the 30<sup>th</sup> Street road improvement.

3. Senior Services:

Funding for senior services will be discussed at the upcoming budget meetings.

4. Marihuana Facility Application Open Window:

The township board has to authorize a period of time to accept marihuana applications for a two week period. The notice will be posted on the front door and the website authorizing February 16, 2023 through March 3, 2023 as the open period of time.

**Motion** by Kelly Redmond to open the marihuana application period to include February 16, 2023 through March 3, 2023, **second** by Geoff Moffat.

**Motion passed 4-0.**

**X. Open Public Comments**

Vicky Wanink, 26226 44<sup>th</sup> had general questions about the township and informed the board a decision on broadband may be considered at the next county commissioners meeting.

**XI. Closed Session, if necessary: N/A**

**XII. Adjournment:**

**Motion** by Kelly Redmond to adjourn, **second** by ~~Nick Toman~~ Kelly Redmond. **Motion passed.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Approved: March 15, 2023

Lia Will, Deputy Clerk – Recording Secretary for Clerk, Sandra B. Rickli

CC: Township Board (7)  
Planning Commission (8)  
ZBA (5)  
Township Attorney